

## **SUCCESSIVE CONVERSIONS OF BUCHAREST HERITAGE BUILDINGS AND BUILDINGS ELIGIBLE FOR PATRIMONY INCLUSION AND TOURISM ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

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**Abstract:** The analysis of the conversion of Bucharest's ancient inns and hotels captures the idea of conservation and perpetuation of local values that had a direct impact on the socio-economic evolution of the area. The elements of the Bucharest architectural heritage and those that should be included in that heritage are the foundation of the capital city's history, a city of contrasts and contradictions, architecturally and functionally speaking. Most of these elements are buildings erected in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, with various architectural influences, with French and English influences playing an important part.

**Key words:** inns, hotels, conversion, tourism entrepreneurship, heritage, Bucharest

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### **INTRODUCTION**

In the last few years a new approach to urban planning is evaluating the culture-led regeneration processes (Affortunato et al., 2010). The issues of cities development trajectories and culture-led local regeneration have become more and more present within the urban studies (Miles and Paddison, 2005 quoted by Affortunato et al., 2010).

The study conducted focuses on analyzing Bucharest's ancient buildings with unquestionable identity value, heritage buildings or buildings eligible for addition to the heritage that played a significant part in the evolution in time and space of tourist activities in a capital city influenced by strong socio-economic changes. An analysis from the point of view of entrepreneurs as profit- motivated suppliers of goods on the market (Pongratz, 2008) and that of the concept that entrepreneurs are actually initiators of projects who permanently seek new avenues for development (Coster, 2003, pp. 8), in connection with the idea that the power of creating the new is superior (Ilieș et al., 2008,

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pp. 148) allows for a description of forms of tourist entrepreneurship in Bucharest typical of the various periods of time.

Entrepreneurship can be described as a state of mind or a course of action typical of the entrepreneur that allows him to launch an idea and then further act on it. Starting off from an article of the 1964 Venice Charter<sup>1</sup>, stating that any monument is inseparable from the history it has witnessed and from the place where it is located, but also from the fact that there is now under way a current of urban reorganization, brought about by the successive stages of development and rejuvenation (Gaspar et al., 1998, pp. 1), and transferring these concepts to Bucharest facts of life, one could say that one path towards urban renovation or reorganization consists in the functional reconversion of buildings. This is not only a conversion of the city image (Monclús, 2000, pp. 1), but also an analysis of the evolution of a sector of the economy of the capital city, which saw successive adaptations typical of the various periods of socio-economic transformation. The study considers the development of tourist activities in Bucharest from the early forms of accommodation facilities through to the luxury hotels nowadays, emphasizing the transformations of the buildings' functionalities in the long run, rather than their mere analysis in terms of quantity and quality.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The methods used included both traditional methods (archive fact-finding, field research or a quantitative approach), and modern computer-assisted methods, i.e. 3D geometric cartographic rendering using ArcGIS Desktop 10 and AutoCad Map software. This cartographic rendering allowed for the capture of changes at various moments in time, by means of the use of Bucharest city topo-cadastral plans issued in 1911 and 1975.

### **BUCHAREST INNS – ARCHAIC FORMS OF HOTELS**

Inns were an economic requirement, but at the same time they were items loaded with history and the picturesque (Zamani, 2007, pp. 31), whose general classification comprises four categories (Potra, 1985, pp. 25): princes' inns, convent and church inns, landowners' inns and merchants' inns. During times of trouble, inns were places of shelter for the locals, or merely their wealth, protection against raiders.

The origin of Bucharest inns lies in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century; the sources of information on the first inn in the capital city mention various names, locations and years; only two will be mentioned here: a) the Inn of Manole the moneychanger and his wife Maria, located close to the Sf. Gheorghe church garden, sometime before 1669 (Potra, 1985, pp. 28; Zamani, 2007, pp. 39; Mucenic, 2004, pp. 13); b) the Șerban-Vodă Cantacuzino Inn, opened in 1666 (Ionescu-Gion, 1899, pp. 482). As dating the first inn in Bucharest is an impossible task, it is almost as impossible to ascertain the exact number of inns and, at later on, the number of hotels open for business in the city.

The increase in trade in the latter half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century favored the emergence of inns as commodity warehouses and places accommodating foreign merchants (Florescu, 1935, pp. 126), and their later evolution indicates a significant multiplication: there were 20 inns by the latter half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and their number rose to 32 by the end of the century (Florescu, 1935, pp. 149); later on, a large part of these inns lent their names to future boroughs in central Bucharest.

Although most of the inns have vanished by now, their presence should be mentioned, because their importance was outstanding, as an archaic form of the tourist accommodation facilities currently found in manifold forms.

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<sup>1</sup> International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites, passed by ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites)

## ASPECTS CONCERNING THE EVOLUTION OF HOTELS IN BUCHAREST

The first hotels go back to 1814-1818 (Hotel Brenner) and 1841 (Hotel Hugues, established by Frenchman Donat Hugues). In 1844, in his book titled *La Roumanie*, Frenchman Jean A. Vaillant considered that there were around 20 inns and 20 hotels in Bucharest. Inns, increasingly few in numbers, are modernized, and their look changes as shops and displays are open on the outer side, instead of exclusively the inner side, as it had been the custom up to that time (Giurescu, 1979, pp. 265).

By the mid-1860 several modern hotels had been built, such as the Hôtel de France, Hotel zur Stadt Wien, Hôtel de Londres and Hotel St. Petersburg, a fact that emphasizes the onset of the process to modernize accommodation facilities, directly influenced by heavy incoming foreign-traveler traffic. In 1858, Italian Giovanni Fieschi opened the Hotel Fieschi, one of the first buildings in Bucharest to be more than two floors high (Parusi, 2007, pp. 262).

Among Bucharest hotels extant by that time, an 1879 Traveler's Guide mentioned: Grand Hôtel du Boulevard, Brofft, Union, Métropole, Manu, Orient, Saint Petersburg, Oteteleşanu, Hôtel de Pesth, all of them located on the Victoriei Way; Concordia on Smârdan street; Victoria on Şelari street; Dacia, Gabroveni, Patria, Simion, Moldo-Român, Transilvaniei, de Bulgarie, Neubauer, Avram, d'Athènes (Parusi, 2007, pp. 346).

By the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century, the city of Bucharest underwent a large-scale and steady process of Westernization, which reflected both the adoption and adaptation of the French model, which led to the city's acknowledgement in Europe as Little Paris (Cepoiu, 2003, pp. 15). Instances of inns and hotels bearing French names are numerous, and French influence also encompassed their architecture.

By 1934, there were in Bucharest 7 luxury hotels (Bulevard, Grand Hotel, Splendid, Athenée Palace, Stănescu and Union), 19 first-class hotels and 19 second-class hotels (Parusi, 2007, pp. 563). Construction of the Hotel Lido was completed in 1930, and the entire complex underwent large-scale renovation in 1957. Hotel Ambassador was opened in 1939, but ten years later its destination was changed. Part of it would be restored to use as a hotel in 1953, and all of it in 1958. In the wake of the 1977 earthquake, it was consolidated and refurbished (Parusi, 2007, pp. 599).

The Bulevard, Continental, Capitol and Capşa hotels were reopened from 1970 onwards.

By the mid-1970s, there were close to 40 hotels in Bucharest. Hotel Capitol opened in 1976 in the wake of large-scale work to renovate the former Hotel Luvru, which had functioned on the locations starting 1882, with a café added to it in 1936. The Hotel Intercontinental opened in 1971, built on the locations of several restaurants (Doina, Zori de zi) and the old state circus, demolished in the late 1960s. In 1977, the Hotel Dorobanţi entered service; it underwent large-scale modernization starting 2000. The three-year works ended with the conversion into a luxury hotel, taken over by the Howard Johnson hotel chain.

During 1981-1988, the plans to systematize Bucharest involved the demolition of more than 40,000 buildings, homes, administration offices, arts and culture monuments, monasteries and churches, all assets of inestimable value. The Hôtel de France was among the hotels demolished. In 1984, construction of the Lebaşda hotel complex began with the restoration of the buildings of the ancient hospital built by Grigore II Ghica in 1735. The Sfântul Pantelimon church, built on the locations of the former hospital, was demolished in 1986 (Parusi, 2007, pp. 760).

Post-1990, the number of hotels rose, with the famous hotels of inter-war Bucharest adding to the new accommodation facilities. After undergoing large-scale consolidation and renovation work, they were modified to comply with the new extant standards. The list of historical monuments, updated in 2010<sup>2</sup>, comprises an important number of hotels, as well

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<sup>2</sup> Decree no. 2361, July 12, 2010

as inns, past and present. Among them, mention should be made of the former Hotel Negoiu (first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century), Hotel Athenée Palace (1914), Grand Hôtel du Boulevard (1867), Hotel Ambassador (1936-1937), Hotel Patria (20<sup>th</sup> century), Hotel Continental (late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the former half of 20<sup>th</sup> century), Hotel Palace (1940), Manuc's Inn (1808) and the "*Hanul cu Tei street*" architectural complex (late 19<sup>th</sup> century).

### **THE MARK OF WELL-KNOWN PUBLIC HOUSES ON THE BUCHAREST'S URBAN LANDSCAPE**

The earliest surviving document mentioning a café in Bucharest goes back to 1667, and it mentioned the café of Hamie the Turk (Giurescu, 1979, pp. 235). Although there was a visible Turkish influence in the emergence of cafés in Bucharest, the Western influence played an increasingly important part starting the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. There was a sizeable number of cafés by that time: Capșa, La Brenner, Strobel, Scheiber, Bristol, Macca, Bruzzessi, Fialkovsky, Oteteleşanu, Brioll, Fieschi etc.

The Kübler café opened in 1868, at the ground floor of the Imperial hotel, and a fashionable spot at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. It was dismantled in 1935, when the hotel was demolished.

The Capșa café, inaugurated in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, was one of the most popular and best-known cafés of the time, and, although it was closed down a few decades later, its history was bound to the evolution of the Casa Capșa. In 1866, brothers Constantin and Grigore Capșa inaugurate the restaurant and the hotel on the upper floor of the building, and the "*La doi frați*" confectionery was then inaugurated in 1868. In 1874, Grigore Capșa lay the foundations of the Casa Capșa and the café opened in 1891. Modernized in 1906, it was converted into a soldiers' casino late during the First World War. The café reopened in 1918, but it failed to recapture its previous success. In 1921 it became a public company, and in 1936 it was closed down. Casa Capșa closed down in 1950, and the only surviving parts were a brasserie on the Victoriei Way and a restaurant on Edgar Quinet street, and the hotel rooms were rented to foreign companies. Renovated starting 1977, the brasserie and the restaurant reopened in 1979, and they were refurbished in the post-1989 period (Parusi, 2007, pp. 303-304).

Another very important asset for the late 19<sup>th</sup>-century tourist industry, but not only that, was the Caru cu Bere beerhall. Transylvania-born Nicolae, Victor and Ignat Mircea opened the Caru cu Bere beerhall in 1879; the current building goes back to 1888. The beerhall was reputed for the quality of its services, especially in the inter-war years (Parusi, 2007, pp. 346), and in the post-1989 years it regained its place among Bucharest's foremost restaurants.

Other beerhalls rose to fame during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, after part of them were refurbished in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century on the locations of old inns (for instance, the beerhall established in 1878 inside the Zlătari inn). The most popular were: the Gambrinus beerhall (opened in 1901 by I.L. Caragiale next to the former National Theater square), the Jubileului beerhall (opened in 1906), the beerhall on the ground floor of the Hotel Athenée Palace (opened 1939) or the Bavaria beerhall, opened by the Luther Brewery in 1941 on the ground floor and basement of the former Hotel Britania (demolished in the former half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, its locations served for the later construction of the well-known Dunărea block of flats).

### **FUNCTIONAL CONVERSIONS OF BUCHAREST BUILDINGS, IN CONNECTION WITH THE EVOLUTION OF HOTELS**

By analyzing the evolution of the emergence of Bucharest hotels and the locations where they were established, there were identified four categories of functional conversions of historical buildings that contributed to the development of modern tourist accommodation facilities.

### **Inns that survived the passing of time and nowadays have varying contributions to the tourist industry**

In this category, mention should be made of two instances that illustrate the history of the emergence and the endurance of accommodation facilities. The first instance is the Hanul cu Tei, established by Hagi Tudorache, one of the capital city's important wholesalers, in 1780 (Potra, 1985, pp. 52); the locations now host a huge art gallery and souvenir shops. The inn was restored in 1972, with the initial digging starting in 1968. The second instance is Manuc's Inn, built by Armenian merchant Manuc Mirzaian during 1804-1808 (Diaconescu, Grigoruță, pp. 309) and still currently offering lodging. The inn has a genuine historical importance: here was signed the Peace Treaty of Bucharest, in May 1812, which meant the separation of Bessarabia from Moldavia; the inn was leased in 1827 and it was sold in 1842, after sustaining damage during the 1838 earthquake; in 1859 it was leased once more, and in 1862 it was bought by Lambru Vasilescu who would go on to modernize it and inaugurate the Hotel Dacia on the premises (in 1874). Later on, it reacquired the name of inn and was restored between 1967 and 1972 (Potra, 1985, pp. 155; Giurescu, 1979, pp. 263).

### **Inns converted into hotels**

A large part of the ancient 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century inns were converted into hotels starting the latter half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Unfortunately, most of them vanished as a result of repeated fires, their plain structures that could not match the landscape of modern structures, as well as due to the absence of consolidation work.

On the locations of the Gherasim inn, mentioned in various documents around 1887, construction began on the Hotel Athenée Palace in 1912. Inaugurated in 1914, the hotel was financed by a French company that had built the Hotel Palace and the Casino in Sinaia; the Athenée Palace was the first building in the capital to use reinforced concrete. After sustaining damage during the Second World War, the hotel underwent a radical renovation and modernization in 1966, increasing its accommodation capacity (Parusi, 2007, pp. 479). In 1939, a beerhall opened at the ground floor of the hotel, and in 1947 the hotel was nationalized. In 1996, the hotel was relaunched, in the wake of significant investments and nowadays it is part of the Hilton hotel chain.

The Damaris inn (named after treasurer Ion Damaris) served as an inn in the former half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and as a hotel from 1855 onwards. Demolished in 1882, its locations were used for the construction of the Hôtel de France, a hotel that bore several names in time, as a result of successive renovations: Grand Hotel, Grand Hotel Lafayette and, starting 1948, Hotel Victoria. Damaged by the 1977 earthquake, it was demolished one year later. Currently, a bank's headquarters are located on the locations, one of the first modern buildings to be erected in post-1989 Bucharest.

The Trăsnea inn was built in the 1820s and demolished in 1897; it was also known as the Orient Inn. On its locations, the Hotel Splendid was built in 1898, destroyed by air raids in 1944 (Potra, 1985, pp. 137; Parusi, 2007, pp. 412). Currently, the Hotel Radisson Blu, the former Hotel București, stands on the locations.

One exception is Manuc's inn, which was converted into Hotel Dacia in 1874 and then resumed its old name. The building preserved its lodging function up to the present time, as it encompasses a hotel and a restaurant.

Other inns were converted, partially or completely, into hotels, as well, but they vanished for various causes, most of the times fires: for instance, the Roșu Inn, built in 1800 on the grounds of the Old Palace (Potra, 1985, pp. 134-136) was converted into a hotel in 1846, after undergoing significant repair works.

### **Hotels converted into students' dormitories**

In this category, mention should be made of two instances. Hotel Union was inaugurated in 1867 and then rebuilt, on the same spot, in 1925. Still standing, the

building was used as a students' dormitory during the 1957-1958 academic year.

The Gabroveni inn is first mentioned in 1739; it was one of the first large inns in Bucharest. In 1877 it was converted into a hotel and by 1900 it was known as Hotel Gabroveni-Universal (Potra, 1985, pp. 149). It is one of the few inns to still preserve its name (Ionescu-Gion, 1899, pp. 492). Later on, it was converted into a students' dormitory.

### **Inns and hotels that hosted various enterprises at some point in time**

The Golescu inn was opened in 1814, and, as documents of that time indicate, was known as one of the seven large inns in Bucharest at that time. Its premises used to host H. Steinberg's antiques shop during 1870-1882, until the inn was demolished (Potra, 1985, pp. 126, Parusi, 2007, pp. 161).

The Bossel inn also opened in the former half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In 1839, Saxon upholsterer Fr. Bossel bought the northern part of the Ghica estate houses on the Mogoșoaia Bridge, renovated them and added new rooms, opening the inn that would bear his name. A ballroom and theater were opened on the premises. In 1846, C.A. Rosetti opens a store to handle book businesses. The building was demolished in 1913.

The Zlătari inn, built early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and demolished in 1903, after sustaining repeated damage, hosted a hostel in 1852.

In 1883, Leon Alcalay, the man who had set up one of the best-known book trading companies in Bucharest in 1864, opened a store that comprised a bookshop, an antiques shop and an office-supply shop on the ground floor of the Hotel Herdan (later turned into Hotel Bulevard), whose construction had begun in 1867. One of Romania's important book dealers, Alcalay set up a publishing company of his own, which would go on and publish the "Everyman's Book Library" collection (Parusi, 2007, pp. 285).

By 1885, the Hotel Fieschi, opened in 1858, hosted the "Human rights" social research center.

The Majestic hotel temporarily hosted the activity of the former National Theater, after the theater building was wrecked by air raids in 1944.

By 1867, the premises of the Hotel Manu, mentioned for the first time in a document in 1860 and located close to the Trăsnea inn, hosted a sharpshooting and a gymnastics school.

By 1848, in addition to other operations, Manuc's Inn also had an office handling the translation of documents from any language (Giurescu, 1979, pp. 263). In 1913, the Dacia hall was converted into wholesale stores, after previously serving as the premises of numerous political meetings (Berindei and Bonifaciu, 1980, pp. 142).

### **FUNCTIONAL CONVERSIONS OF BUILDINGS ALONG THE VICTORIEI WAY AND THE IMPACT ON ACCOMMODATION FACILITIES**

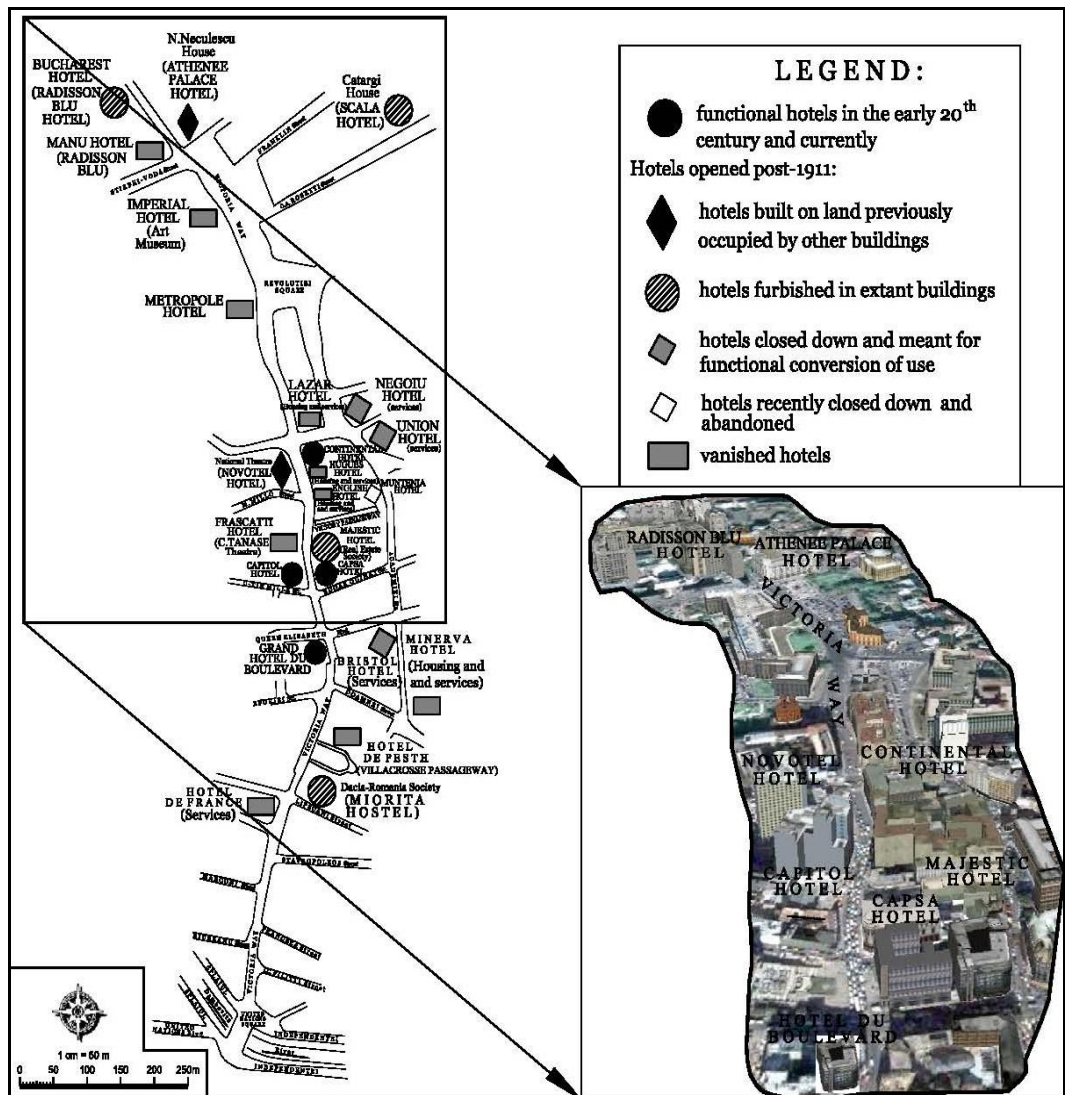
The present Victoriei Way is the past Mogoșoaia Bridge, built during the reign of Constantin Brâncoveanu (in 1692), a road paved with oak logs laid perpendicular to the direction of the road. The road used to link the city of Brâncoveanu's time, on the Dâmbovița riverside, and the Brâncoveanu estate to the northwest of the city (Giurescu, 1979, pp. 77). In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Mogoșoaia Bridge went on to become the main thoroughfare of Bucharest, with the nobility's estates laid along it, some of them later converted into state institutions' offices, others into residences, and yet others into luxury hotels that are still representative for the city's tourist industry. The Mogoșoaia Bridge was renamed into Victoriei Way in 1878. By the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Victoriei Way remained the core of finance-banking and merchant activities in the most important city in the country.

Initially with a twofold function (large estates of the nobility and stores), the Mogoșoaia Bridge will grow integrated into the trade circuit of the old city commercial

center, because its south-north direction placed it at the limit of some of the most important routes going west-east (Mucenic, 2004, pp. 24).

The comparative analysis conducted, encompassing 1911-2011 and the area alongside the Victoriei Way, offers valuable information on the transformations the most important thoroughfare of the capital city underwent in the past century. In this respect, Bucharest's detailed topographical 1911 plans were consulted; these are some of the best-drawn plans of the city, as they render an accurate image of the city, with all of its specific urban features. It is much more detailed when compared to previous plans (those of 1894 and 1899), and tends to be rather a topo-zoning plan, as, in addition to listing all houses, with their owners' names, and all public buildings, street names and tram routes, it also comprises contour maps and a whole set of landmark heights.

Evolution in the past century revealed five categories of hotels (figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Functional conversion of historical buildings along the Victoriei Way (comparative analysis: 1911 and 2011), Authors' elaboration on ArcGIS 10 & AutoCadMap (Source: topo-cadastral plans (1911, 1975), Google Earth)

### **Hotels in use early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and still in use nowadays**

Among accommodation facilities that have been in use for one century already there are four well-known hotels: Bulevard, Capitol, Capșa and Continental.

The Hotel Bulevard, whose building was inaugurated in 1867 under the name of Hotel Herdan, is the oldest hotel in Bucharest nowadays. Construction was completed in 1871, and two years later it was renamed into Grand Hôtel du Boulevard; at that time, it was the biggest hotel in Bucharest. After nationalization in 1949, it stopped being used as a hotel until after the earthquake in 1977, when it regained its initial destination (Hotel Bulevard). Nowadays, the Hotel Bulevard is closed down because of the consolidation and modernization works under way.

The Hotel Capitol is the former Hotel Luvru, whose construction was initially conducted in 1882, and then in 1905 and 1910. The hotel hosted the Agricola General Insurance Public Limited Company (as mentioned in the 1911 plans). The fire of that same year destroyed the 1909 documents establishing the Romanian Writers' Society, which was headquartered there. In the 1930s, the hotel hosted the well-known Café Royal on the ground floor. The Hotel Capitol was inaugurated on the premises in 1976.

The Hotel Capșa was inaugurated in 1866 by brothers Constantin and Grigore Capșa (later on, the confectionery and café were also opened). Converted into a soldiers' casino late during the First World War (a fate similar to that of the Hotel Capitol, converted into an army barracks), it was damaged by the aerial bombing of 1944 and later on dropped out of the spotlights until the 1970s, exactly like the hotel across the street.

The Hotel Continental (built on the locations of the Grand Hotel Broft) entered service in 1884. The Luncheon bar opened in 1900 was one of the first bars in Bucharest. The Continental Hotel was closed down several times during the communist regime and underwent important restoration works twice: in the 1970s and in 2007-2009. Its rejuvenation occurred in the wake of the latest renovation, which preceded its reopening in 2009. Several shops were set up on the ground floor, reminding one, to a certain extent, of the shops that used to do business there early in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

### **Hotels opened post-1911**

There are two sub-categories identified here:

#### *Hotels built on land previously occupied by other buildings*

The former National Theater in Bucharest, inaugurated in 1852, was replaced, more than one century and a half later, by the current Novotel hotel, opened in 2006. The interesting thing is that on the locations of the former National Theater there used to stand the Filaret Inn, dedicated to the Metropolitan Church in 1794. In 1813 it was converted into a hospital and then into a children's institute (in 1835), and in 1847 it was demolished to make room for the construction of the National Theater (Potra, 1985, pp. 84). The theater unfolded its activity on the locations until 1944, when the building was destroyed by aerial bombing.

Hotel Athenée Palace, built in 1912-1914 (on the locations previously occupied by Nicolae Neculescu's house), underwent two major phases of renovation and modernization work, in the 1960s and in the 1990s, with the initial architecture undergoing certain modifications. Like a large part of the hotels in Bucharest, it is currently part of an international hotel chain (Hilton).

#### *Hotels refurbished in extant buildings*

The Hotel Miorița, recently converted into Hostel Miorița, works out of a building included on the list of heritage buildings (a Dacia-România Society asset by 1911).

The building where Hotel Majestic is currently located was built in 1920. In the 1950s the hotel was decommissioned and converted into an annex of the Odeon Theater. The first steps to consolidate and renovate the building were taken in 1970, when the building regained its initial destination as a hotel. From 1990 on, it underwent a process of heavy transformation, including the addition of a new hotel wing, which eventually led



to its rising to a place of prominence among luxury hotels in Bucharest (currently, it has been taken over by the Ramada Hotel chain).

Hotel Radisson Blu is the descendant of the former inn and hotel Orient, the Hotel Splendid and eventually the Hotel București.

The București International Hotel was built in 1980, as the biggest hotel complex of the time, on the place of a block of flats that collapsed during the 1977 earthquake, whose ground floor hosted the famous Nestor confectionery (renamed into Republica upon nationalized), favored by the artistic community. The Radisson Blu Hotel is currently the biggest five-stars hotel in Romania.

### **Hotels closed down and meant for functional conversion of use**

This category includes three hotels that serve as positive examples of sustainable conversion of buildings. The Hotel Bristol, built in 1894 on the Cosma and Max Anell estates, with a well-known café whose regulars were the businesspeople of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, currently hosts several public institutions, and public houses on the ground floor.

The Hotel Regal, demolished in the 1930s in order to make room for the Hotel Stănescu (later renamed into Negoiu) was one of the luxury hotels in Bucharest's midtown section. Included on the list of heritage buildings, it currently hosts various institutions and companies working in the services sector – mainly banking, insurance, and copy-editing.

The Hotel Union was built in 1925, and the current building goes back to the restoration work done in the 1970s. Early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the ancient building used to host the Bucharest Cyclists' Club. Nowadays, the hotel was converted into the Union International Center where diplomatic activities and various other services (banking and legal, among others) unfold.

### **Hotels recently closed down and abandoned**

This is the state of the former Hotel Muntenia, closed down since 2006. Apparently converted from the former Hotel Paris, the Hotel Muntenia currently is in an advanced state of deterioration, although the building has an outstanding architectural style and a high potential for inclusion in the patrimony.

### **Vanished hotels**

The category of vanished hotels is numerically the most important, as it consists in 10 hotels.

Hôtel de France was built on the locations of a former hotel (the Damaris hotel) in 1882 and it serves as a negative instance of urban intervention. Its disappearance in 1977 meant a fracture in the architecture of the area, as the current glass-covered building fails to integrate in the style of the CEC headquarters and the Victoria store.

The Hôtel de Pesth was replaced on the premises by the building now circumscribed by the Macca-Villacrosse covered passageway (Zamani, 2007, pp. 109), an architectural complex mentioned by Fr. Damé in 1906.

The Hotel Minerva is included in the 1911 topographical plans, and its history is bound to that of the Minerva Printing House which used to work in the vicinity.

The Frascati Hotel was furnished in 1875 inside the former premises of the Hotel Oteteleşanu. Demolished in 1935, its premises were used for the construction of the Constantin Tănase Revue Theater.

The Hotel English emerged late in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Nowadays, it is a residential building and there are several public houses on the ground floor; the hotel is bisected by the English Passageway.

The Hotel Hugues was the second hotel in Bucharest, inaugurated in 1841 in the plaza where the future National Theater was to be built. In 1884, a chocolate shop and the Riegler confectionery opened inside the hotel. Surviving the passing of time and multiple

architectural modifications – mainly negative ones – the hotel lost its importance in the time after the Second World War; the building is now used for residential purposes, and there are stores on the ground floor.

The Hotel Lazăr was built in the former half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century on the Vanic estate (as mentioned on the 1911 plans). A mention in an 1873 document points out that the first Congress of the Press was held inside the hotel. The hotel also hosted the well-known grocery store of Dragomir Niculescu. In the 1930s it was demolished and a high-rise was built on the locations (known as the Romarta block).

The Hotel Métropole (a former inn), mentioned as being located on Gh. Asan's estate in 1911, was later on demolished in order to widen the Royal Palace Plaza.

The Hotel Imperial, with its well-known Kübler café, was demolished in 1935, and its locations served to expand the Royal Palace gardens, and later on the right wing of the Palace.

The Hotel Manu, mentioned in a document in 1860, opened close to the future Hotel Orient. The locations of the Manu and Orient hotels were later on used to build the Hotel Splendid. Early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the hotel was also known as High Life (Zamani, 2007, pp. 109).

### **PROMOTION OF SUCCESSFUL INSTANCES OF TOURISM ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND RESCUING HISTORICAL BUILDINGS**

The two instances of successful ventures, with distinct contributions to the conduct of tourist activity in the capital city (an accommodation facility and a public house), were selected with the very view of reinforcing the idea that the meaning of a historical building, part of the heritage or eligible for inclusion in it, is not limited to the past alone, but that the building can very well be (re)introduced into the current urban landscape, thus contributing to perpetuating the identity of a certain space.

#### **Cafepedia**

The Cafepedia café is located on 2 Arthur Verona Street, inside a (neo) classical villa (figure 2). The qualitative renovation of the villa by a team of architects and constructors brought into focus the outstanding architecture of the building. Cafepedia is a chain of cafés whose business history goes back a significant length of time (the first café was opened in 1640 in the Piazza San Marco). The long tradition of catering to the public explains the choice of special locations. This led to the preference for locating the café inside a particularly beautiful building, and the restoration of the villa that hosts the café indicates the sense of respecting the beautiful. The building where the café was opened has a past, as it was built in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, and was known as the Mitilineu house.



**Figure 2.** Conversion of an ancient building into a café



**Figure 3.** Historical building converted into a hotel

### **The Scala Hotel**

The building that hosts the Scala Hotel has an unsuspected history. It was built in the interwar period in the neo-Romanian style, using the plans of architect Gh. Simotta on a tract of land bought by the Catargi family.

The building impresses the viewer thanks to its well-defined dimensions and the elegance of architectural decoration, enhanced by the steps taken to renovate the building. The Romanian architecture features (Brâncovenesc-style loggia) and the elegance of the building cause it to stand apart in the urbanized and everyday landscape of Bucharest as an item that was put to best use by means of a successful conversion. The conversion allowed turning the ancient building into a tourist accommodation facility, which meant achieving a perfect blending of actions to restore and to capitalize on a building of historical and architectural importance (figure 3). The image of the hotel preserved the particular features of the building, drawing from its age and elegance. The hotel rooms were furnished in the same style as the building construction, and thus became spaces with an archaic tint and a distinguished air, typical of the Confort Boutique concept, each of the rooms being individually furnished with classical furniture. The image of the hotel was shaped along these features that allow the hotel to stand apart in Bucharest's range of accommodation facilities.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

Nowadays, rather than carrying on with a certain local architectural *savoir-faire*, as it happens in European capitals, owners have a different approach to capitalizing on ancient Bucharest buildings: successive sales, cheap renovation work, closures, demolitions, with investors' preference for new constructions frequently predominating. As a result, accepting, rediscovering, rehabilitating and reusing the ancient buildings and urban spaces become indispensable steps to preserve the history of the city of Bucharest. As part of these steps, tourist services might serve as a possible course to follow, with a view to removing from anonymity certain buildings with special attributes.

Encouraging protection of the patrimony might be achieved by the following steps: the increasingly active participation of authorities, lawmakers and business ventures, coordinated with the replacement of a permissive legislation by a stricter and exact one concerning cultural heritage; the necessity for programs meant to educate the population in the spirit of appreciation of the assets and their identification with the past history of the place (significant importance might lie in the promotion of successful instances of tourism entrepreneurship, such as the Cafepedia café and the Scala hotel); publicizing the idea that the heritage buildings are essential for the development and affirmation of a place, as buildings are important in term of their intrinsic value, and their content.

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